

Hot Food and Drink Uses in Town Centres

Supplementary Planning Guidance

October 2014



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Supplementary Planning Guidance

HOT FOOD AND DRINK USES IN TOWN CENTRES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is to expand upon the Council's existing planning policy on hot food and drink uses contained within the adopted Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP). It will outline how the Council will consider planning applications for hot food and drink uses in town centres and the specific policy issues which will be considered in the determination of such applications.
- 1.2** Following adoption by the Council, this SPG will be a material consideration in the determination of all change of use and new build planning applications for hot food and drink establishments in the town centres, including applications for renewal of permissions.
- 1.3** This guidance will not apply to planning applications for hot food and drink establishments outside the town centres. These planning applications will be considered against the LDP policies.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority receive numerous planning applications each year to change the use of buildings and retail units to hot food and drink establishments in the town centres. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of hot food takeaway establishments within the town centres. The increase in the number of people using these facilities has led to concern being expressed by local residents, local businesses and others, in terms of their cumulative impact on both the character of the area, vitality of the shopping areas and residential amenity. However, hot food and drink uses are considered to be more appropriately located in town centres, rather than outside as they add to the vitality of the town centres, providing diversity and support to the daytime retail and evening time leisure economies.
- 2.2** In response to this, research has been carried out to look at how the balance of uses in the town centres has changed, what effect this has had and whether specific planning guidance is required to regulate new build and further proposed changes of retail units and buildings to hot food and drink establishments.
- 2.3** This has led to the production of this guidance, which provides a detailed planning policy framework in which future decisions on individual applications can be made. The overall aim of the guidance is to ensure that an appropriate balance of hot food and drink businesses with other uses is achieved in town centres, to support the retail function and to protect residential amenity.

- 2.4** For the purpose of this SPG, hot food and drink establishments are defined as any use falling within the Use Class A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987. Table 1 below gives an indication of the uses which are included and excluded from this definition and which are covered by this SPG.

Table 1: Examples of uses included and excluded from this Supplementary Planning Guidance Note

Specific Use included in this SPG	Specific use excluded from the SPG
Chinese / Indian / Other Takeaways	Cold food sandwich bars
Kebab House / Burgers / Chicken	Night Clubs
Fish and Chip Shop	Private Members Club
Pizzeria	
Drive-Through Premises	
Public Houses / Wine Bars	
Restaurants/ Bistros	
Coffee Shop	

- 2.5** The Council would encourage anyone considering submitting an application for a hot food and drink use within the town centre to read this SPG and to contact the Local Planning Authority (see Appendix B for contact details) in advance of submitting an application to discuss the issues which are raised in this document on a site specific basis. There is a charge for this service but it may result in a saving in the long term in avoiding submission of an application that is inappropriate through raising issues that need to be considered in your submission.

3.0 THE POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1** This note has been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and the LDP.

National Planning Policy

- 3.2** National Planning policy (as contained in *Planning Policy Wales Version 5, November 2012*) seeks to:

- “*promote established town, district local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and other complementary functions;*” and
- “*enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres.*”

- 3.3** Paragraph 10.1.3 states:

“Vitality is reflected in how busy a centre is at different times and in different parts, and attractiveness in the facilities and character which draw in trade.

Viability, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the centre to attract investment, not only to maintain the fabric but to also to allow for improvement and adaptation to changing needs.”

3.4 However, paragraph 10 of Technical Advice Note 4: *Retailing and Town Centres* states:

“Changes of use can create concentrations of single uses, such as restaurants and takeaway food outlets, where cumulative effects can cause local problems. Such proposals should be assessed against development plan policies on their contribution to diversification and on the cumulative effects on matters such as parking and local residential amenity.”

Local Planning Policy

3.5 Policy SP3 (see Appendix A) of the LDP sets out the strategic approach for delivering thriving town centres and improving the vitality and viability of town centres in Blaenau Gwent. Policies DM5 and DM6 include criteria on the approach to hot food and drink establishments in town centres:

- Primary Retail Areas are identified within which only A1 uses will be permitted.
- A3 uses will not be permitted outside the Primary Retail Area where they harm the vitality, and viability and retail mix of the area as a result of a proliferation of this type of use.

4.0 THE NEED FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

4.1 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 subdivides different types of use classes into separate classes of use. In general, any proposal to change the use of premises from one use class to another class requires planning permission.

4.2 Part A of the Use Classes Order covers three classes of use which are generally found in shopping areas:

A1 Shops

A2 Financial and Professional Services

A3 Food and Drink

4.3 Use Class A3 broadly covers the following uses: restaurants, cafes, snack bars, wine bars, public houses and hot food takeaways. Planning permission is not required to change the use of premises already in the use class e.g. a fish and chip shop to one selling a different type of hot food, e.g. Chinese takeaway or a public house to a fish and chip shop.

4.4 If it is intended to use the property for a hot food and drink business (A3 use class) and it is currently not used for that purpose then planning permission for a change of use will be required.

4.5 In addition to permission to change the use of the premises, planning permission will be required for:

- Extensions to a property and may be required for external alterations (including shop front alterations and external shutters. Further guidance is available on what is acceptable in Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design Guidance for Shopfronts)
- New or altered signs may require advertisement consent; and
- Special consent may be necessary for certain proposals affecting listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas e.g. Tredegar town centre.

5.0 APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS FOR HOT FOOD AND DRINK USES

5.1 A3 uses are local facilities that would be expected in town centres. However, the number and clustering of such uses should not detract from the overall character and function of the centres. The predominance of A1 shops should be maintained.

5.2 The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan identifies a retail core, known as the primary retail area, for the Principal and District Town Centres (see Appendix C-G for town centre and primary retail area boundaries as defined in the Local Development Plan). Within primary retail areas only A1 uses will be permitted. The clustering of A1 uses is considered beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centres.

5.3 Outside the primary retail areas, greater flexibility will be applied and a diversity of uses, including hot food and drink establishments will be encouraged. Mixed use developments combining retailing with entertainment, restaurants and leisure uses will be encouraged to promote lively centres as well as reducing the need to travel to visit a range of facilities.

NUMBERS AND CLUSTERING OF A3 USES

5.4 Generally, in Blaenau Gwent, food and drink uses are dispersed. However, there are pockets where there is a concentration of such uses, including premises such as public houses and hot food takeaway establishments, which have a distinctive character and late night opening. In order to minimise the impact on vitality and viability, concentrations or clusters of hot food and drink uses should be avoided as they often have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

Numbers of A3 Uses

Guideline 1

In the Principal and District Town Centres, the number of A3 uses (including vacant buildings with former A3 use) outside the primary retail area should be no greater than 25% of the total number of retail units / buildings outside the Primary Retail Area. Within Primary Retail Areas, only A1 uses will be permitted.

- 5.5 Table 2 below sets out the current position (April 2013) in terms of the number of A3 uses in the Principal and District Town Centres (including the vacant buildings with former A3 use) outside the primary retail areas.

Table 2: The Number of A3 Uses in the Principal and District Town Centres (including Vacant Buildings of Former A3 Use) outside the Primary Retail Area (April 2013)

Town Centre	Number of Ground Floor Units outside the Primary Retail Area	Number and % of A3 Uses (including Vacant Buildings with Former A3 Use) outside the Primary Retail Area
Principal Town Centre		
Ebbw Vale	82	16 (19.5%)
District Town Centres		
Abertillery	87	18 (21%)
Brynmaur	68	16 (23.5%)
Tredegar	103	22 (21%)

- 5.6 The LDP (as set out in Policies SP3 and DM6 at Appendix A) categorises Blaina as a Local Town Centre with no Primary Retail Area. The town centre is smaller in size and has a residential character and principally serves the needs of the residents of Nantyglo and Blaina.

Guideline 2

In Blaina Local Town Centre, the number of A3 uses (including vacant buildings with former A3 use) should be no greater than 25% of the total number of units within the town centre boundary.

- 5.7 Table 3 below sets out the number of A3 uses at ground floor level (including vacant buildings with former A3 use) in Blaina town centre, as at April 2013.

Table 3: Number of A3 Uses (including vacant buildings with former A3 use) Blaina Town Centre (April 2013)

Town Centre	Number of Ground Floor Units	Number and % of A3 Uses (including Vacant Buildings with Former A3 Use)
Local Town Centre		
Blaina	55	13 (23.6%)

- 5.8 The reason the percentage is set at 25% is that above this level A3 uses begin to detract from the retail function of the town centre. This threshold approach is intended to anticipate the level at which harm would occur.

Clustering of A3 Uses

- 5.9 Where clusters of A3 uses develop, groups of shops are lost and the continuity of a retail frontage can be broken up disrupting footfall. "Dead frontages" can occur especially if A3 businesses, e.g. hot food takeaways

catering for the evening trade are closed during the daytime. Owners are encouraged to not use roller shutters during the daytime. 'Hotspots' of activity can also be created, where problems of noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour generated by large numbers of patrons, especially dispersing late in the evening.

Guideline 3

To maintain a diverse and active shopping street not dominated by groups or individual A3 uses, it is recommended that no more than two A3 uses should be adjacent* to each other in the Principal, District and Local Town Centres.

*adjacent refers to the properties being next door to each other

5.10 A working group comprising of Planning Policy, Planning Control, the Town Centre Manager, Environmental Health, Licensing, Town Council's and Town Centre Forum representatives, and the Police was established to assess the situation and consider an approach to hot food and drink establishments. The thresholds set out in the guidelines are based on local knowledge of the working group and extensive survey information undertaken by Planning Policy.

5.11 Where an A3 use is ancillary to the primary use of the proposal this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Ground Floor Land Use Survey

5.12 The Planning Policy Team undertake annual surveys of the ground floor uses along the shopping frontages of the five town centres of Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Brynmawr, Tredegar and Blaina. This in itself will assist with the consideration of future proposals in the town centres. To view the latest annual survey for each town centre click on the link here <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/environment/19124.asp>. The Planning Policy Team will be able to provide an up to date position to assist with planning applications (see Appendix B for contact details).

6.0 DETAILED GUIDELINES

6.1 This section provides detailed guidance on other considerations against which all planning applications for food and drink establishments are assessed. The relative importance attached to these factors varies according to the precise nature and location of the proposal. It is therefore important that applicants provide as much detail as possible about their proposals, especially in relation to the requirements outlined in the following section of the guidelines.

6.2 The other main considerations in relation to hot food takeaway establishments and public houses are summarised below:

- Highway matters;
- Smells / Discharge of fumes;
- Litter;
- Noise and disturbance;

- Hours of opening;
- Crime and Disorder (section 17 considerations) / Anti-social behaviour; and
- Shop fronts and commercial frontages.

Highway Matters

- 6.3** Highway considerations are very important when considering a planning application. Planning permission is unlikely to be granted where increased traffic flows would cause or aggravate congestion or otherwise negatively affect highway safety. Concurrently, pedestrian access must be safe and not be prejudiced by the proposal.
- 6.4** A feature of hot-food takeaways is their tendency to generate short-term on-street car parking, directly outside the premises and on adjacent side streets. This can cause obstruction on main roads and inconvenience to local residents, especially in the evenings when residential areas are fully parked. Proposals, which might encourage short-stay car parking near to junctions, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, bus stops and double yellow lines, are likely to be unacceptable. It follows therefore that they may be best located on secondary roads or on sites not fronting directly onto the highway. Policy DM1 (see Appendix A) of the adopted Local Development Plan requires that new development has regard to the safe, effective and efficient use of the transport network.
- 6.5** On the other hand, some food and drink establishments generate longer-term parking requirements, and applicants must show that adequate arrangements exist for customer and staff parking, either on site where appropriate or in the vicinity of the proposed site. If an area is already congested with parking in the evening, the proposal may increase this problem to an unacceptable degree. Further guidance is provided in the Access, Car Parking and Design Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Smells and Discharge of Fumes

- 6.6** Smells and smoke resulting from the preparation and cooking of hot food can cause nuisance to nearby residents. Problems relating to smells must be mitigated by the installation of suitably designed extraction systems. The design of the extraction system will vary from premises to premises, but should be located to the rear of the property. Visually prominent front facing plant is rarely acceptable. Modern equipment, combined with high-level ventilation is adequate to reduce smell to prevent nuisance at any sensitive location. Advice on the design, suitability and installation of the extraction system should be sought from Environmental Health (see Appendix B for contact details). Details of such should be submitted with the planning application if possible to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider visual impact.

Litter

- 6.7** No matter how careful the owner of the hot food take-away, patrons often generate litter, resulting in nuisance to the nearby residents, as well as

making the area look unsightly. Businesses should ensure that litter arising from their activities is removed and disposed of appropriately from the vicinity of their premises. Local authorities have legal powers to require that this is done where recurrent litter issues arise from specific premises.

- 6.8** Proposals should include adequate facilities on the premises for the storage of refuse generated by the business. Refuse bags or receptacles should not be left outside the premises or nearby streets (except for collection purposes) as this can attract rodents and create a public health hazard. Suitable access must be provided for the collection of refuse.

Noise Disturbance

- 6.9** The proximity of a proposal to residential premises is also important because of the nuisance which can be caused to residents by noise and increased activity associated with customers and their cars or taxis arriving and leaving premises. In general, proposals are unlikely to be acceptable where residents live immediately above or next-door. However, should planning permission be granted under such circumstances, applicants will need to demonstrate the provision of satisfactory noise insulation of all equipment and soundproofing between floors or walls before the use commences.

Hours of Opening

- 6.10** Most businesses usually operate on a 9:00am-5:30pm basis, for example a coffee shop located in a town centre. However, premises wishing to provide hot food or drink between 11.00 pm and 5.00 am require a premises licence issued in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003. The types of premises that may require a licence would include hot food takeaways, public houses, night-clubs etc. An application for a premises licence must be submitted to the Council's licensing section (see Appendix B for contact details) and if, no objections are received, a licence will be granted for an indefinite period. If objections are received, the Council's Licensing Committee would decide if a licence can be granted and on what terms. Opening for other uses may also be subject to environmental health and other legislation. All hours of opening in Blaenau Gwent are controlled by the licensing regime.

Crime & Disorder / Anti-social Behaviour

- 6.11** Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 imposes a statutory duty on local and police authorities to consider the impact that their daily functions and services will have on crime and disorder. The aim is to anticipate the likely consequences on crime of decisions and look to ensure that any negative impact is avoided and positive outcomes are promoted. This guidance has been prepared in consultation with the police authority.
- 6.12** A3 uses by their very nature attract large numbers of people. Statistics show that where there is a gathering of people during the evenings/nights there tends to be instances of Crime & Disorder/ Anti-social behaviour. Concentrations of A3 uses in a particular area exacerbate the problem,

particularly when hot food takeaways are situated in close proximity to licensed premises such as public houses. These factors and figures for Crime & Disorder / Anti-social behaviour must be taken into account when an application is made. Blaenau Gwent has a formal protocol with Gwent Police. They will be consulted on every application for an A3 use. The view of the Police will be key to determining every planning application for uses covered in this SPG.

Shop-Fronts and Commercial Frontages

- 6.13** Shop-fronts and commercial frontages are an essential element of the commercial activity of Blaenau Gwent's Principal, District and Local town centres. If the visual quality of the area's shopping street is to be enhanced, well-designed shop-fronts built with good quality materials are essential. The design, proportion and scale of the shop-front must relate to the building of which it is part, and to adjoining buildings.

7.0 OTHER LEGISLATION

- 7.1** Proposals will also require any approvals under other legislation e.g. environmental protection, licensing and building regulations. Applicants are responsible for compliance with these requirements.

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1** The Council will need to ensure that the guidelines set out in this document continue to be relevant, and to do this the SPG will be kept under review through annual land use retail surveys in the town centres and monthly retail take up surveys. In this way, it will be possible for the Council to ensure that the SPG remains effective as a land-use planning document.

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE ADOPTED BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SP3 The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of the Town Centres

1. In order to deliver thriving town centres and protect local shopping facilities a retail hierarchy is defined as follows:

Principal Town Centre

- a. Ebbw Vale will perform a sub regional retail role.

District Town Centres

- b. Abertillery, Tredegar and Brynmawr will act as district shopping centres principally to serve the needs of their districts'. Brynmawr District Town Centre will be linked to the new retail provision at Lakeside Retail Park.

Local Town Centre

- c. Blaina will act as a local shopping centre that will be protected and enhanced to provide facilities for the local communities.

Neighbourhood Centres

- d. Local shops in neighbourhood centres will be protected to meet every day local shopping needs.

2. In order to improve the vitality and viability of the town centres:

- a. Shops, offices and other commercial premises, where appropriate, will be upgraded by means of refurbishment and redevelopment;
- b. Opportunities to improve the retail offer will be implemented;
- c. The provision of better vehicular access and circulation arrangements, improved public transport facilities and provision of additional car parking spaces will be provided where necessary; and
- d. Disabled access and facilities will be improved.

6.21 In order to meet future retail needs in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner, a retail hierarchy has been established. At the top of the hierarchy is the Principal Town Centre of Ebbw Vale (sub-regional role), followed by Abertillery, Tredegar and Brynmawr (District Town Centres) followed by Blaina (Local Town Centre) and Neighbourhood Centres.

6.22 The Wales Spatial Plan identifies Ebbw Vale as a key settlement that has a critical role to play in the success of the Capital Region. Consequently, Ebbw Vale will perform a sub-regional retail role. The LDP seeks to maintain a strong, attractive and dynamic town centre that is highly accessible and has a good degree of choice in both comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) shopping and quality services and facilities. The Plan acknowledges that the town centre has the physical capacity for further growth in its retail and service provision.

- 6.23** District and Local Town Centres form an important part of Blaenau Gwent's retail hierarchy and of its social, economic and physical fabric. In addition to providing local shopping facilities they also accommodate a range of services, facilities and employment.
- 6.24** District Town Centres are generally larger and generally contain a greater variety of retail and non-retail uses, including banks, building societies, leisure facilities and business offices. Consequently, they are generally more commercial in nature and draw comparatively larger number of shoppers. A Local Town Centre is generally smaller in size and variety of uses and more likely to retain a residential character. The size and character of District Town Centres means that they are more likely to be able to satisfactorily accommodate a greater range and mix of non-retail uses including business offices and commercial leisure facilities.
- 6.25** Local shops play a vital role in sustaining smaller neighbourhood centres and reducing the need for residents to travel to meet everyday needs. Neighbourhood centres may typically include a small convenience shop, newsagents and sub post office.
- 6.26** The Heads of the Valleys Retail Project (CACI January 2008) identified that there are opportunities, in each of the 5 retail areas, to enhance the quality of the retail offer, through attracting good independent retailers and enhancing the quality of the retail accommodation and retail environment.
- 6.27** The low car ownership rates in Blaenau Gwent, together with high levels of deprivation mean that the Council needs to ensure that all members of the community can access the retail areas. This relates to access by bus, car, walking and cycling together with internal circulation and parking provision.
- 6.28** There are Town Centre Action Plans in place for the Principal and District Town Centres, which identify regeneration schemes. A Regeneration Action Plan covers Blaina Local Town Centre.
- 6.29** The LDP provides a framework for retail development in Blaenau Gwent over the Plan period. In order to address local retailing need, the Plan identifies land for 10,200 sq m of comparison and 2,445 sq m of convenience floorspace over the plan period. Land is allocated for retail development under Policy R1. Full details of these calculations are provided in the Updated Retailing Background Paper.
- 6.30** For each town centre in the retail hierarchy, a town centre boundary has been defined. The town centre boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map and on plans in Appendix 5.

DM2 Design and Placemaking

Development proposals will be permitted provided: -

- a. They are appropriate to the local context in terms of type, form, scale and mix;**
- b. They are of good design which reinforces local character and distinctiveness of the area or they positively contribute to the area's transformation and raise density, where appropriate;**
- c. The development has regard to 'Secured by Design' principles;**
- d. In the case of extensions to buildings, they reflect, complement or enhance the form, siting, materials, architectural details and character of the original building, its curtilage and the wider area;**
- e. In the case of proposals for new and replacement shopfronts, and signage, they make a positive contribution to the street scene. Roller shutters should be sensitively designed and integrated into the overall design of the shopfront;**
- f. In the case of the public realm and key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions, the character and quality of the built form is to a high standard of design and, where appropriate, includes public art; and**
- g. Landscaping and planting, where appropriate, achieves a suitable visual setting for the scheme and integrates it into the wider context.**

7.23 All new developments must enhance and respect their surroundings and contribute towards the local identity. Developments must be of an appropriate type, form, scale and mix, for their location or positively contribute to the area's transformation and raise density as the Council is committed to raising the standard of design on all new development. Developers will be required to submit comprehensive masterplans for residential proposals of 50 dwellings and over which must have regard to the need to create high quality, sustainable and locally distinct places.

7.24 Much can be done to reduce opportunities for crime through management, design or changes to the environment. The design and layout of new development can make crime more difficult to commit and/or increase the risk of detection for potential offenders. Developers are therefore encouraged to take account of the principles of 'secured by design' which are available at www.securedbydesign.com.

7.25 The Council acknowledges the desire of residents to stay within existing accommodation by adapting and upgrading their dwellings as their lifestyle

and personal needs change. However, the changes must be balanced against the manner in which works to existing properties both individually and collectively, have an effect on the character of an area. It is important that such extensions are well designed, in relation to the main building and to the general street scene. Extensions should be subservient to the original building and, where possible, significant alterations and extensions should be confined to the rear and side elevations. Detailed guidance in respect of householder applications is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance on Householder Development in Blaenau Gwent.

7.26 The success of Blaenau Gwent's commercial centres is crucial to the delivery of the objectives of the LDP. Shopfronts and commercial frontages are an essential element of the commercial activity of Blaenau Gwent's Principal, District and Local Town Centres. If the visual quality of the area's shopping streets is to be enhanced, well-designed shopfronts built with good quality materials are essential. The design, proportion and scale of the shopfront must relate to both the building of which it is part, and to adjoining buildings. Detailed guidance is provided in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Shopfronts and Advertisements.

7.27 Whilst all design should be of good quality it is imperative that buildings in key locations should provide a good impression of the area as this will raise the image of the area. This adds, not only to the quality of life for local residents, but also enhances the ability to attract potential investors and visitors to the area. Blaenau Gwent has a strong cultural heritage and the Council will ensure that new developments continue to add to the cultural fabric of the area. In considering proposals for public art as part of development schemes, the Council will seek artist commissions that add cultural value to the architecture, landscape design and sense of place.

7.28 The landscape and the natural environment are amongst the most important local resources and both need to be protected and enhanced. This does not mean that there should be no change but there is a requirement for high, quality design solutions that complement or contribute to landscape character. The key is to incorporate areas of established importance and ensure these are protected and enhanced, for example through their management and the incorporation of new features such as native trees and plants.

DM5 Principal and District Town Centre Management

Development proposals incorporating a change of use of ground floor premises in Principal and District Town Centres will be subject to the following management:

- a. Primary Retail Areas are identified within which only A1 uses will be permitted.**
- b. A2, D1 and D2 uses will be encouraged outside the Primary Retail Area.**
- c. A3 uses will not be permitted where they harm the vitality, and viability and retail mix of the area as a result of a proliferation of this type of use.**
- d. Within the town centres, the change of use of the ground floor units to residential use will not be permitted.**

7.41 This Policy applies to the Principal Town Centre of Ebbw Vale and the District Town Centres of Brynmawr, Tredegar and Abertillery.

7.42 Shopping not only contributes to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town centres, but provides benefits to the local economy and can complement the leisure and tourism objectives of this Plan. It is therefore vital to protect the retail core of the main town centres and oppose developments which harm or undermine this function.

7.43 A retail core referred to as a Primary Retail Area in the LDP has been identified for Principal and District Town Centres. The boundaries of the Primary Retail Areas are shown on the Proposals Map and are also shown on plans in Appendix 5.

7.44 This Policy restricts Primary Retail Areas to A1 uses. The clustering of A1 uses is considered beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centres. The mixture of uses within the Town Centres indicate that a high percentage of units within the identified Primary Retail Areas are currently class A1 use (relates to only the ground level of premises). Further information is available in the Retailing Background Paper.

7.45 Outside the Primary Retail Area, a diversity of uses are encouraged. Mixed use developments combining retailing with entertainment and leisure uses should be encouraged to promote lively centres as well as reducing the need to travel to visit a range of facilities. Leisure uses can benefit the town centres, and with adequate attention to safeguarding amenities can contribute to a successful evening time economy.

7.46 The number and concentration of food and drink establishments should not dominate the town centre and therefore detract from the overall character and function of the centres. The Hot Food Takeaways and Public Houses

Supplementary Planning Guidance is to be updated to provide further guidance to support this Policy.

- 7.47 Within the town centre boundaries, the change of use of ground floor units to residential will not be permitted although the conversion of first and second floors of premises within the town centres will be permitted and encouraged. The conversion of vacant and redundant first and second storey floorspace in retail areas can provide a useful addition to the residential stock and bring new life to town centres.

DM6 Management of Blaina Local Town Centre

Development proposals incorporating a change of use of ground floor premises in Blaina Local Town Centre will be subject to the following management:

- a. Retail, professional and financial services, entertainment and leisure and community uses will be supported.**
- b. A3 uses will not be permitted where they harm the vitality, and viability and retail mix of the area as a result of a proliferation of this type of use**
- c. In the case of a change of use to residential, the retention of the retail site for retail / commercial purposes has been fully explored without success by way of marketing for appropriate retail / commercial purposes at reasonable market rates for a minimum of 12 months.**

- 7.48 Local Town Centres play a vital role, not only as places to shop, but because they provide the opportunity for a wide range of services to be delivered locally in locations that are accessible by a choice of transport in the centre of communities.
- 7.49 Blaina is expected to act as a Local Shopping Centre, principally serving the residents of Nantyglo and Blaina. The emphasis will be on convenience (food) shopping with an element of day-to-day comparison (non-food) shopping. A range of facilities and uses will be encouraged consistent with the scale and function of the Centre, to meet people's day-to-day needs.
- 7.50 The significant increase in the number of hot food takeaways and public houses within Blaina Local Town Centre has led to concern being expressed by local residents, local businesses and others in the area on the vitality of the shopping areas and residential amenity. This Policy aims to protect the character and function of the town centre. Detailed guidance on Hot Food Takeaway and Public Houses in Town Centres is contained in the updated Supplementary Planning Guidance.

- 7.51 It is acknowledged that over the life of the Plan, that some retail units within the retail centres will become redundant. Vacant units can have a significant impact on the appearance and amenity of an area and can harm wider regeneration objectives. This Policy will ensure that there is flexibility to consider the appropriate reuse of these units for residential.
- 7.52 Planning applications for the change of use to residential would need to be supported by evidence that a 12 month marketing exercise has been undertaken for retail / commercial purposes at reasonable market rates. The Council will closely scrutinise the evidence put forward to demonstrate that the units are no longer required for retail/commercial purposes.

APPENDIX B: USEFUL CONTACTS

Development Management

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Planning Control
Blaina District Office
High Street
Blaina
NP13 3XD

Tel: (01495) 355555

Planning Policy

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Planning Policy
Blaina District Office
High Street
Blaina
NP13 3XD

Tel: (01495) 355538

Commercial Improvement Grants

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Regeneration Division
Business Resource Centre
Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate
Tredegar
NP22 3AA

Tel: (01495) 355540

Building Control

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Building Control
Blaina District Office
High Street
Blaina
NP13 3XD

Tel: (01495) 355520

Environmental Health

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Environmental Health
Anvil Court
Abertillery
NP13 1DB
Tel: (01495) 357813

Trading Standards and Licensing

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council,
Environmental Health,
Anvil Court,
Church Street,
Abertillery,
NP13 1DB

Tel: Trading Standards (01495) 356138
Licensing (01495) 355961

Community Safety

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Community Safety Partnership
Bedwellty House
The Lodge
Tredegar

Tel: (01495) 356145

Highways and Transportation

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Highways and Transportation
Baldwin House
Victoria Business Park
Ebbw Vale
NP23 8ED

Tel: (01495) 355371

Police Architectural Liaison Officer

Community Safety Department
Maindee Police Station
81 Chepstow Road
Newport
NP19 8XD

Tel: (01633) 247925

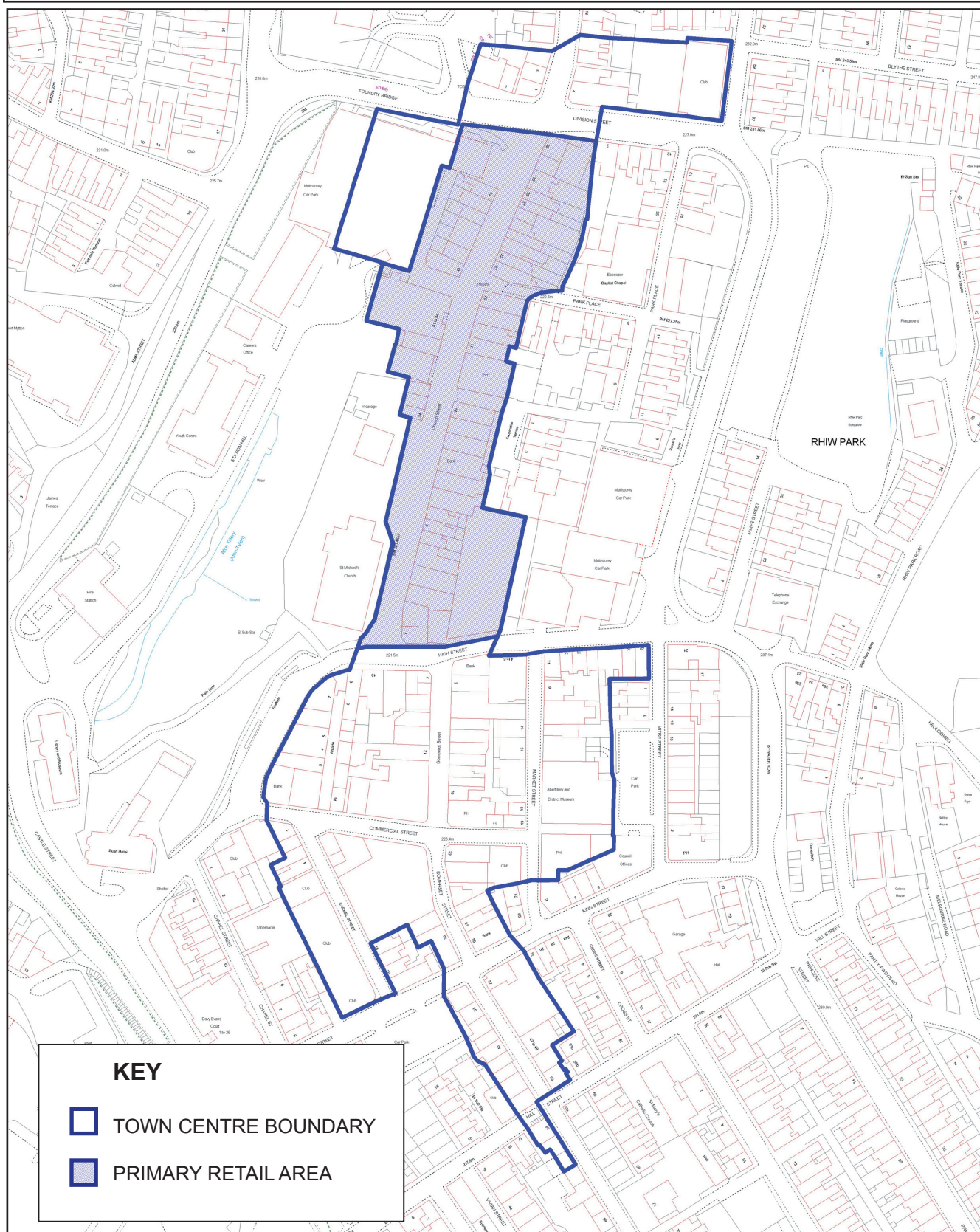
Town Centre Manager

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Regeneration
Business Resource Centre
Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate
Tredegar
NP22 3AA

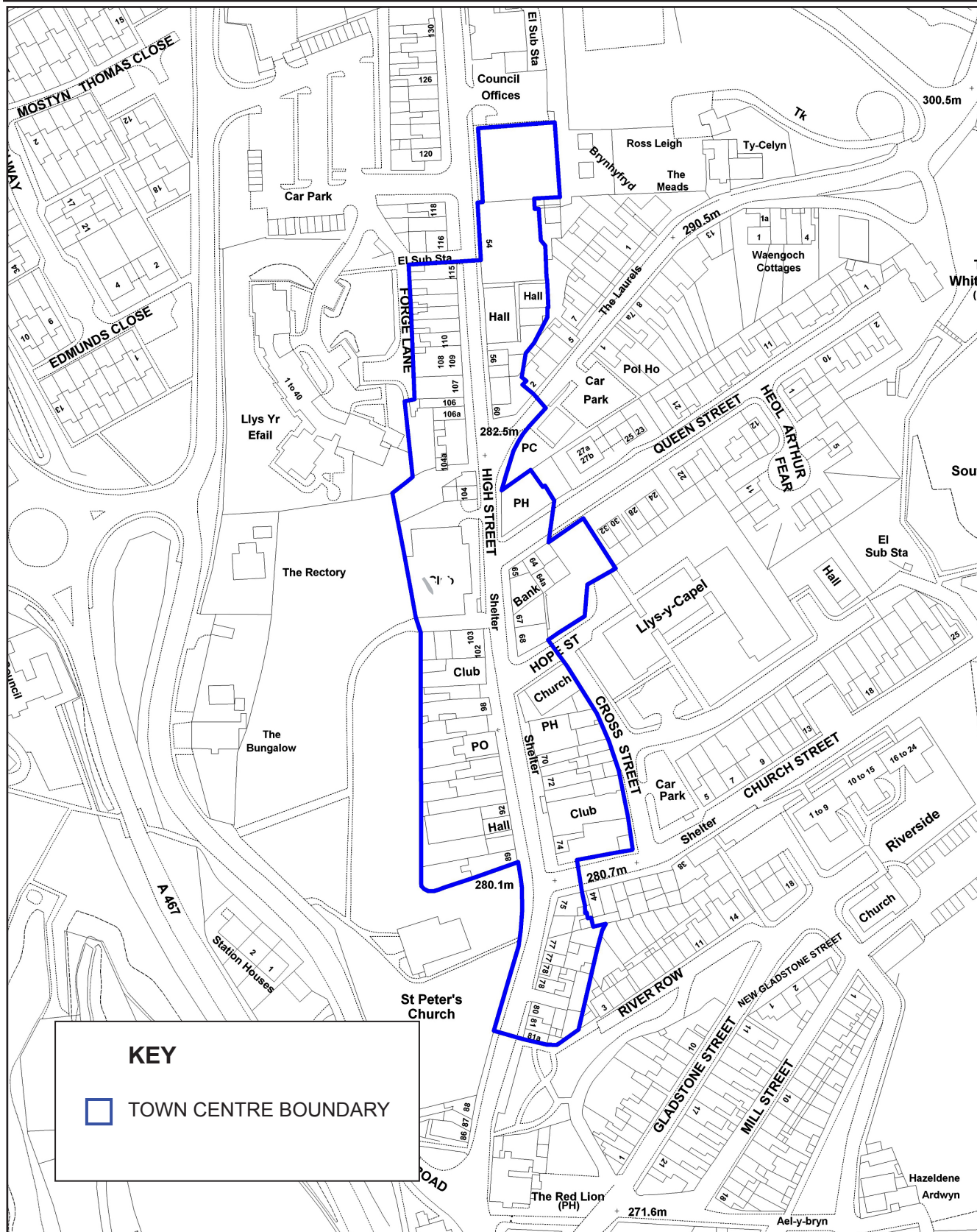
Tel: (01495) 355565


Date : 18/01/2010	Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan	 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Regeneration Division
Scale : 1:4000	Town Centre Boundaries & Primary Retail Areas	

Town Name: Abertillery

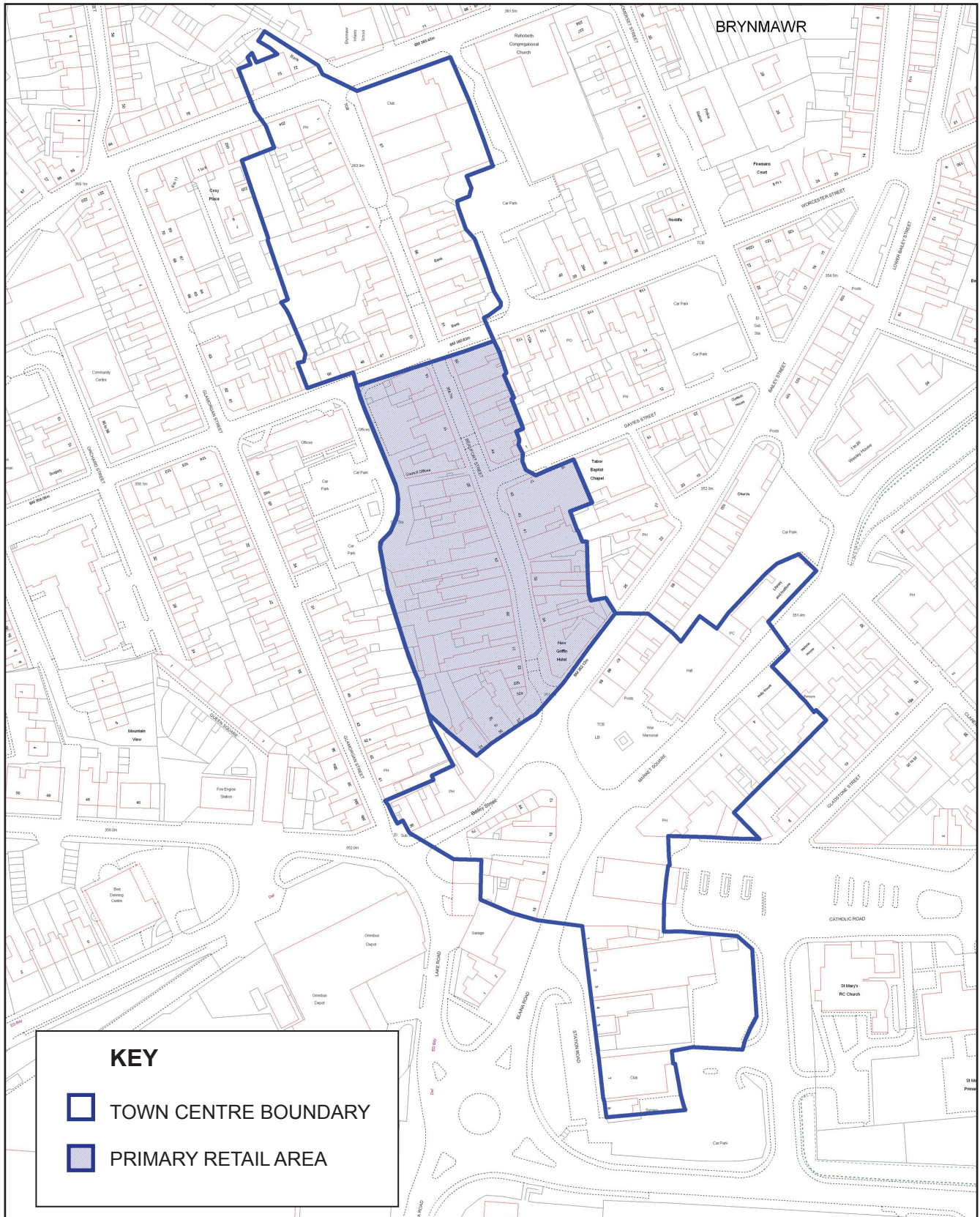


Town Name: Blaina



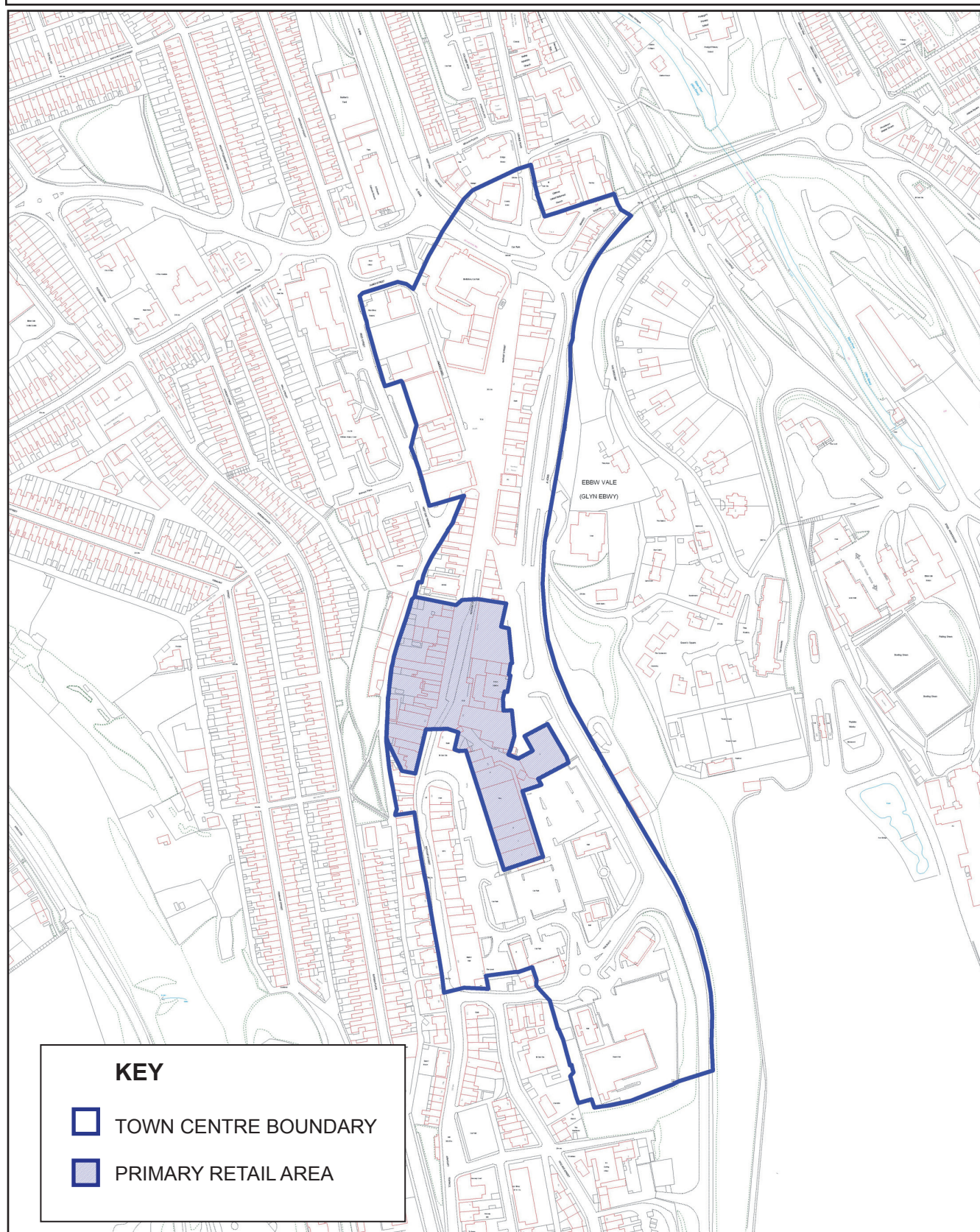
Date : 18/01/2010	Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan	 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Regeneration Division
Scale : 1:4000	Town Centre Boundaries & Primary Retail Areas	

Town Name: Brynmawr



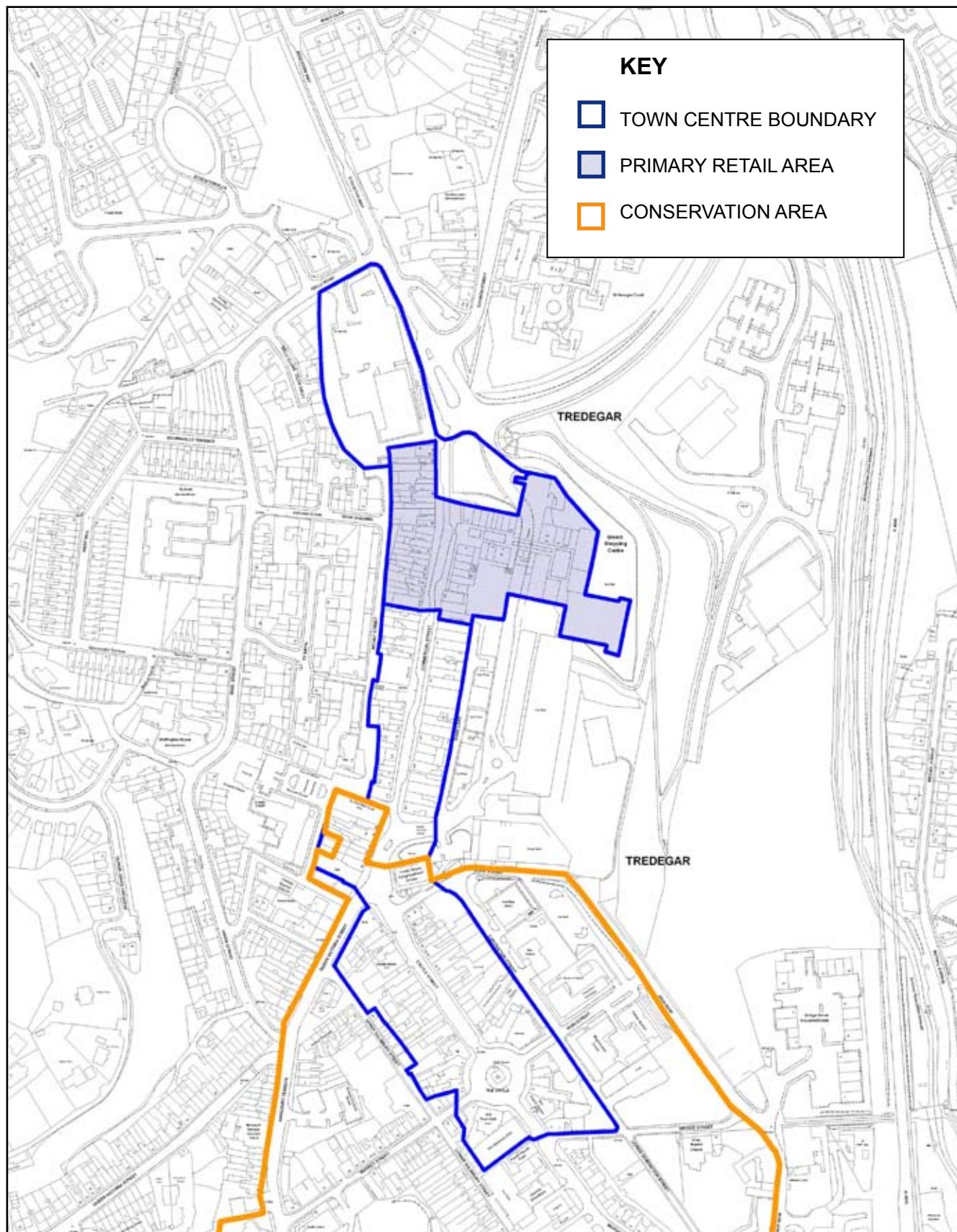
Date : 18/01/2010	Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan	 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Regeneration Division
Scale : 1:4000	Town Centre Boundaries & Primary Retail Areas	

Town Name: Ebbw Vale



	<p>Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan</p>	 <p>Blaenau Gwent <small>Ginger Bread and Soil County Borough Council</small> Regeneration Division</p>
<p>Scale : 1:4000</p>	<p>Town Centre Boundaries & Primary Retail Areas</p>	

<p>Town Name: Tredegar</p>



Planning Policy Team

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Blaina District Office
High Street
Blaina
NP13 3XD

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